

Castlemaine Naturalist

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Monthly newsletter of the
Castlemaine Field Naturalists Club Inc.



Plume moth *Stangeia xerodes* Maldon
Photo – Noel Young

Carpets in the Mt Alexander Shire.

By Chris Timewell

Using information from the third volume of the Moths of Victoria, moth species from the subfamily Sterrhinae (commonly known as Waves) that potentially occur in the Mount Alexander shire were addressed in a Castlemaine Naturalist article in late 2011. This present article addresses the moths from the subfamily Larentiinae potentially occurring in the Mount Alexander Shire, also based on information from the third volume of the Moths of Victoria.

The Larentiinae are also known as Carpets, due to the patterns on their wings. They are small to medium sized moths. They often have transverse markings on their wings, and are usually inconspicuous when they hold their wings flat against the surface on which they are resting. There are approximately 140 species known to occur within Victoria.

Using the distribution maps and other accompanying information provided on the CD that comes with volume 3 of the Moths of Victoria, the two tables below list the Carpet moths that are either known to occur or potentially occur in the Mt Alexander Shire. Victorian species that are unlikely to occur here are not listed.

In summary, from the ~140 Carpet moth species from 24 different genus that are known to occur in Victoria, at least 17 species from seven genus have been confirmed as occurring in the Mt Alexander Shire (Table 1). Another 45 species from 15 of the 24 genus are predicted to potentially occur in the shire (Table 2), with the remaining ~80 species unlikely to occur here ever. Not all of these species have been scientifically described and named.

Table 1. Common and Latin names of Subfamily Larentiinae moths that are *known* to occur in the Mt Alexander Shire (sourced from descriptions in the *Moths of Victoria Part 3*).

Latin Name	Common Name
<i>Anachloris subochraria</i>	Golden Grass Carpet
<i>Chloroclystis testulata</i>	Pome Looper
<i>Chrysolarentia aprepta</i>	Brown Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia correlate</i>	Yellow Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia cydalima</i>	Glorious Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia decisaria</i>	Grassland Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia gypsomela</i>	Gypsum Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia imperviata</i>	Elusive Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia mecynata</i>	Mecynata Moth
<i>Chrysolarentia plagiocausta</i>	Black-lined Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia severata</i>	Finely-lined Carpet
<i>Chrysolarentia squamulata</i>	Scaled Carpet
<i>Epyaxa hyperthrya</i>	Banded Epyaxa
<i>Epyaxa sodaliata</i>	Sodaliata Moth
<i>Hypycnopa delotis</i>	Grey Carpet
<i>Microdes squamulata</i>	Dark-grey Carpet
<i>Poecilasthena pulchraria</i>	Native Cranberry Moth

Table 2. Common and Latin names of additional Subfamily Larentiinae moths that *potentially* occur in the Mt Alexander Shire (sourced from distribution maps in *Moths of Victoria. Part 3*)

Latin Name	Common Name	Probable	Possible
<i>Acodia pauper</i>	Pauper Carpet		X
<i>Anachloris uncinata</i>	Hook-winged Carpet	X	
<i>Aponotoreas dascia</i>	Dascia Carpet		X
<i>Aponotoreas petrodes</i>	Grey-lined Carpet		X
<i>Chaetolopha leucophragma</i>	Forest Carpet		X
<i>Chloroclystis approximate</i>	Plumed Carpet	X	
<i>Chloroclystis catastreptes</i>	Green and Brown Carpet		X
<i>Chloroclystis filata</i>	Filata Carpet	X	
<i>Chloroclystis insigillata</i>	Insigillated Carpet	X	
<i>Chrysolarentia adornata</i>	Adorned Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia bichromata</i>	Two-toned Carpet	X	
<i>Chrysolarentia conifasciata</i>	Broad-banded Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia heliacaria</i>	Heliacaria Carpet	X	
<i>Chrysolarentia heteroleuca</i>	White-patched Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia interruptata</i>	Boxed Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia leucophanes</i>	Pale-tipped Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia leucozona</i>	White-zoned Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia lucidulata</i>	Lucid Carpet		X

Latin Name	Common Name	Probable	Possible
<i>Chrysolarentia microcyma</i>	Finely-marked Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia plesia</i>	Plesia Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia polyxantha</i>	Yellow Carpet		X
<i>Chrysolarentia subrectaria</i>	Straight-lined Carpet	X	
<i>Chrysolarentia trygodes</i> subsp. <i>Crocota</i>	Variable Carpet - Saffron Form		X
<i>Chrysolarentia trygodes</i> subsp. <i>Trygodes</i>	Variable Carpet - Reddish Form		X
<i>Chrysolarentia trygodes</i> subsp. <i>Phaulophanes</i>	Variable Carpet - Dark Form		X
<i>Chrysolarentia</i> (undescribed species #1)	Carpet	X	
<i>Eccymatoge callizona</i>	White-spotted Carpet		X
<i>Eccymatoge morphna</i>	Carpet		X
<i>Epicyme rubropunctaria</i>	Red-spotted Delicate	X	
<i>Epyaxa subidaria</i>	Subidaria Moth	X	
<i>Eucymatoge scotodes</i>	Scotodes Carpet		X
<i>Microdes diplodonta</i>	Double-toothed Carpet		X
<i>Microdes melancausta</i>	Black-patch Carpet	X	
<i>Microdes villosata</i>	Distorted Carpet	X	
<i>Poecilasthena anthodes</i>	Orange-grounded Delicate		X
<i>Poecilasthena balioloma</i>	Stitched Delicate		X
<i>Poecilasthena pellucida</i>	Pale Delicate		X
<i>Poecilasthena</i> (undescribed species #1)	Delicate		X
<i>Phrissogonus laticostata</i>	Apple Looper	X	
<i>Visiana brujata</i>	Brujata Carpet		X
<i>Xanthorhoe anaspila</i>	Dark-patch Carpet	X	
<i>Xanthorhoe anthracinata</i>	Black-barred Carpet		X
<i>Xanthorhoe strumosata</i>	Strumosata Carpet		X
<i>Xanthorhoe vacuaria</i>	Vacuaria Carpet		X
<i>Xanthorhoe xanthospila</i>	Yellow-spotted Carpet	X	

From the committee -

A reminder that club subscriptions are now due

Please check that you have attended to this –
if your envelope address does NOT include '02/13' you are no longer financial

You may wish to support -

Victorian National Parks Association

campaign to save the Blue Groper and protect Victoria's marine environment
Details at the general meeting, or www.vnpa.org.au

Moolort Wetlands excursion 10/3/12

Rita Mills

The old Scottish saying, that my Granny was often heard to quote "*The best made plans of mice and men are apt to gang a-glae*" came to mind, when only a few, six in all, people were able to go on the field trip to the Moolort plains because of last minute changes of plans. The weather was pleasant, but again few birds were seen – well much fewer than I expected to see, perhaps because I was driving? And sort-of leader by default? We saw a few raptors, though.

Our first stop was the first swamp on the left hand side of the road, in a paddock, just after Joyces Creek and Cairn Curran Res. There was still water in this one, but I didn't see any ducks at all, but there were a couple of Little Pied Cormorants, as well as a number of very vocal Little and Australian Ravens.

I decided to take the road down to Campbell town, where Doug and I had visited a few months ago, when there was lots of water in the wetlands there. On Saturday there was none, and I realized how shallow those swamps are, but at the first one we stopped at, which was right up to the road when Doug and I were there, there are some magnificent old Red Gums in the paddock. Red Gums need to be flooded regularly, but not left flooded, and I wondered if, combined with a landholder who hasn't cleared the trees, and the shallow wetland, these trees have been able to grow to the beautiful specimens they are.

While we were admiring these a car passed us and came back again. My reaction was "do they think we're trying to pinch their sheep, or what?", but it was a local woman who was able to tell us that a huge effort is being made to get these beautiful wetlands preserved by fencing them off. I gather most of the landholders are more than willing to cooperate, and can see it as a very good thing for the region, but she also told us that the Central Goldfields Shire is okaying a monstrous great broiler farm in the middle of the plain – there's already a number of sheds there now. This is in an area that has no surface water, and it would have to be brought up from underground, and would have to have dams to take the effluent from the farm. What happens when it floods!? So her visit was both encouraging and very disturbing. She gave us a pamphlet to bring back to the club before she left us.

We drove on down to the swamp opposite Salagaris road, to find that this huge body of water had become a sea of long grass. This is the swamp where I saw a family of Brolgas years ago. There was only a small area of water in it at that time. We drove on down Salagaris road, and the swamp off that was also dry, but we did stop to identify a raptor. I forgot to note it down, but Noel was keeping a list.

As leader, I decided to head back to Tullaroop Res for afternoon tea, after which my passengers and I left for home, while Noel and co. headed for Long Swamp.

Our meager bird list: Australian Ravens, Little Ravens, Magpie, Little Pied Cormorant, Willy Wagtail, Black shouldered Kite. And at Tullaroop res; New Holland Honeyeater, Red rumped Parrots, Sulfur-crested Cockatoos, Galahs, Crested Pigeon, Striated Pardalote, Blue Wren, and Little Eagle.

A post-script to Moolort Wetlands

On our Sunday drive on 18/3 Doug and I visited Merrin Merrin Swamp, which was our projected destination on the Field Trip, only due to unforeseen circumstances we didn't get there. We found lots of water, heard lots of frog calls, and saw two swans and a Magpie, as well as hearing all sorts of twitters in the grass, which I couldn't identify (and didn't see a single bird that could have been making the sound), so I don't feel so bad that we didn't get there after all – though it would be a wonderful place to visit some time.

We'd driven to Maryborough via Barrinhup, and that is the place, in the shallow swamp just past the Caravan Park, that I saw quite a number of birds, but it seems most are scattered far and wide. I think that we have been spoilt over the past 12 months.

Fungi and Moss Guides – can you help?

The Friends of the Box Ironbark Forests are working on two local natural history guides, one on common fungi of the Mount Alexander shire, the other on mosses. It is hoped to publish them by autumn 2013.

Field Naturalists are invited to participate in the project either by participating in working groups in the field, or by submitting photos, or simply by offering input into the kind of info they'd like to see on these subjects.

If you're interested in having a go, contact

Bernard Slattery at slatteryb@aapt.net.au, or 5470 5161

Flinders Island --- A Flying Visit

George Broadway

Sunday March 5, a bright sunny day at Essendon Airport as the Morrisses and the Broadways boarded the Sharp Airlines flight to Flinders Island. The plane, a Fairchild I believe, was long and narrow with one seat on each side of the aisle, so everyone had a window seat. However the view from our section of the plane was restricted by the wing and the engine. Nevertheless, I had a good view of the West coast of Wilsons Prom as we flew South, and glimpses of small rocky islands scattered about in Bass Strait.

On landing on Flinders Island we were greeted by the owner of our hire car, (a Japanese station wagon), who had also provided a bag of food as requested by

Helen, as our intention was to drive immediately to Killiecrankie at the northern end where Helen had organised a beach house for the first part of our stay. Arriving at Killiecrankie we were immediately enthralled by the sight of the setting sun casting a honey-coloured light on the reef of rocks which ran about halfway across the bay. The bay itself was a magnificent sight with a long sweep of sand, with majestic granitic rocks forming a striking backdrop. After a couple of photos it was time to move into our lodgings and to delve into the bag of provisions to see what there was for dinner. Alas! Not the crayfish Kit had been hoping for, but instead another Island product, no not smoked Muttonbird, but wallaby sausages. These went down very well with the bottle of wine Helen had had the foresight to order. Later we found the crayfish in the freezer, so we enjoyed that on our second night.

Early the next day we went for a stroll along the beach hoping to reach the far side of the bay. However we were thwarted by the Killiecrankie Creek which was flowing wide and strong. Not wishing to test the depth we opted for discretion and returned to the house. Later we went for a stroll in the neighbourhood hoping to see a few of the birds which inhabit or visit the island as listed in my book of Flinders Island birds. Our house was close to the water with a backdrop of a mountain of Granite. The trees consisted mostly of Sheokes and Bluegums, but not many birds did we see.

After lunch we went exploring by car, first along Boat Harbour track, then later to the most northerly part of the island to a place called Palana which lies at the northern end of the main North-South road. Unfortunately we were unable to reach downtown Palana because of road repairs which were blocking the road so had to retrace our tracks and return home to our eagerly anticipated crayfish.

At this stage we had seen plenty of Silver Gulls, Pacific Gulls, Black Currawongs and a Sooty Oystercatcher. Green Rosellas were not uncommon and a party of Yellow-tailed Black Cockatoos was encountered.

At breakfast next morning we were entertained by a party of fishermen who had come to the little landing place just below our house with the intention of retrieving the crays which they had kept in pens in the bay. We watched as they hauled out the crays, most of which appeared enormous, and transferred them to plastic bins ready for their trip to market. At \$70+ per kilogram, we watched as several thousands of dollars worth was hauled from the water. The show over it was time to pack up and move to our next lodging down at the South end of the Island at a place with the intriguing name of "Trousers Point". En route we called at Wybalenna where Tasmanian aborigines were settled when they had been rounded up on the mainland of Tasmania.

One of the main items of interest was the chapel which had been built for the settlement but is now in disuse although still in quite good order. The other was the nearby cemetery, located in a rather bleak and windswept area. Here Helen was excited to discover a family reference in an inscription on a memorial which had been erected in the centre, but she can tell you more. In Wybalenna is a museum which contains many artefacts illustrating the history of the island, including a detailed description of the Mutton-birding industry.

We arrived in Whitemark, the main settlement on the Island just in time for lunch which was had at the island bakery. Then it was time to stock up round the corner at the supermarket, and fill up with petrol before driving the sixteen kilometres or so to meet our next landlady. Sometimes we wonder how we managed before mobile phones. When she appeared she asked us to follow her as otherwise finding the place would be difficult.

So we followed as she led us along a barely formed track which wound in and out among the trees and up and down over crests till we wondered whether we would ever arrive. However eventually we did, and found a comfortable beach house set among scrub, a short stroll down to Fotheringate Bay and a magnificent view of Mt Strzelecki. We were a little apprehensive about having to use a generator to provide 240 volt power, but it turned out to be merely a matter of flicking two switches and we were in business. That night we barbecued lamb steaks from the island butcher.

- to be continued next month

About a dozen members of the **Sale FNC** will be staying in Maldon this month. Provisional program is -

Tuesday 17 April:	Muckleford forest RWB circuit walk, Bells Swamp and Laanacoorie
Wednesday 18 April:	Steam train. Castlemaine botanical gardens
Thursday 19 April:	Mt. Tarrengower, Nuggetty, Carmens Tunnel, North British mine.

Castlemaine FNC members are invited to join in. I will provide copies when the program is finalised
- Ern Perkins

Observations

- ◆ The Boobook Owl in the Gardens still around – George Broadway
- ◆ Late March saw a Barn Owl fly into the trees near home – Rita Mills
- ◆ At home - Four Wedge tailed Eagles over the house in high wind, a Kingfisher with cicada on the fence, Spotted Marsh Frogs (a first) and a Brown Falcon attacking the Choughs – Denis Hurley
- ◆ On three or four occasions in March saw small groups of Yellow tailed Black Cockatoos flying over Happy Valley – Noel Young
- ◆ Swift Parrots have been sighted in the area; Debbie Worland reported seeing one on March 12, and Geoff Park on March 20 (Spring Hill track). No flocks yet – they appear to be scouts. They were heard in Newham (north of Mt Macedon) as early as February 18 (Laury O'Conner) so they may have headed north-east to the coast this year.

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of the club

Castlemaine Field Naturalists Programme

April 2012

Fri April 13 meeting: speaker CAROL HALL
subject 'A Touch of Ice - Spitsbergen & Greenland 2010.'

Sat April 14 field trip: a small bush reserve

Sat May 5 Swift Parrot survey weekend

Fri May 11 meeting: speaker STUART DASHPER: Birds of Maluku

VISITORS ARE WELCOME AT CLUB ACTIVITIES

General meetings - (second Friday of each month, except January) are held in the Uniting Church (UCA) Hall (enter from Lyttleton St.) at 7.30 pm.

Field Trips - (Saturday following the general meeting) leave from the car park opposite Castle Motel, Duke Street at 1.30pm sharp unless stated otherwise. BYO morning and/or afternoon tea. Outdoor excursions are likely to be cancelled in extreme weather conditions. There are NO excursions on total fire ban days.

Business meetings - fourth Thursday of each month, except December, at George Broadways; Greenhill Ave., at 7.30 pm. Members are invited to attend.

Subscriptions for 2012

Ordinary membership: Single \$30, Family \$40

Pensioner or student: Single \$25, Family \$30

Subscription includes postage of the monthly newsletter, Castlemaine Naturalist

2012 Committee

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